

FOR THE EMPEROR

(Continued from page 5.)

acter both in body and mind. He wore his flaming red hair long and it set off with startling vividness his pale face and brilliant blue eyes. He was the chief firebrand, absolutely fearless and with a genius for military command—especially on the offensive—that was awesome. Despite all our machinations he forged rapidly to the front and, as a general, was in comfort and, as a general, was in command of the left wing, which is to say the "Army of Southern Poland."

OUR troops had become so enthusiastically bold and presumptuous as a result of their victories that they were for invading Germany and attacking Ludendorff in the vicinity of Berlin. By delaying the arrival of supplies Lenine and Trotsky were able to dissuade the armies from taking the offensive despite the fiery protests of Strauss.

The troops entrenched themselves with scientific precision under the instructions of the best engineers. I took no measures to hamper this work, merely requiring the engineers to furnish reports and maps. These were copied by members of my staff and sent off to Ludendorff, who was thus informed of every turn and twist in the entire trench system reaching from the Baltic sea to Cracow.

AUSE for a moment to give more minute details concerning the triumphs which had inspired our troops with confidence and which had proved so edifying to the entente allies. When the armistice of November 11, 1918, was signed each side had perfected engines of war more destructive than any hitherto employed. The Americans had built cannon that could hurl a ton of explosives forty miles. The British had constructed airplanes which could carry bombs weighing two tons. The Germans had devised a land warship which could force its way past almost any obstruction and which carried a twelve-inch gun.

Supplied with armament of this character the Sparticans attacked Warsaw. Within a few hours the city had been reduced to a mass of twisted iron and masonry. The residential district was a sea of flames raging amid the wrecked houses. The first assault was made with 100 airplanes which, in a single flight, dropped 400,000 pounds of explosives.

We employed the bombing planes against the British fleet in the Baltic and sank at least a dozen vessels during the campaign. On several occasions we obtained direct hits. In two cases dreadnoughts turned turtle and sank although the bombs had not hit them. The explosions occurred several hundred feet away and caused such an upheaval of water that the ships could not maintain their balance.

Other inventions, which I need not mention here, were employed to annihilate the Polish and Rumania armies and devastate the cities and the countryside. The net result was that

our hair-brained troops conceived the notion that they could conquer the world, and it is my own opinion that had I not involved them in irretrievable disaster they would have overrun Germany and Austria.

BY various subtleties Lenine, Trotsky and I were able to throw the central and northern military zones into confusion without arousing suspicion, but in the south Strauss, ever vigilant and strenuous, preserved an admirable organization. We feared to counteract his work in any material degree because we knew that we would simply stir up revolt and virtually sentence ourselves to death. Nevertheless we were able to transmit all necessary information to Ludendorff.

Our ultimate object was to disperse the armies without a fight, but as the days passed it became increasingly certain that we must permit an engagement. With all energy we strove to handicap the armies directly under our control. We supplied misfit ammunition, dispatched our most effective artillery to rear areas far from the fighting line, concentrated the land warships in zones where they could be of no use and, whenever the chance offered, blew up ammunition dumps and supply depots. We made the food situation as bad as possible, although our control of transportation was not complete because of the fidelity of such a vast number of men to the cause of Bolshevism.

It merely remains for me to describe the final battle. Ludendorff took the offensive in the Baltic regions and in central Poland while Strauss carried the fight to Ludendorff in the south. Our troops fought at first with extreme confidence and an animal ferocity which was appalling, but day after day they were massacred. On the other hand Strauss was making head against Ludendorff. He gained strategic advantages at the very outset and was in a fair way to turn Ludendorff's right wing.

At this crisis the German commander appealed to us to employ some method of striking Strauss from the rear. We knew that it would be utterly futile to use the methods which had proved so effective among our own troops and we cast about in our haste and terror for a secret device. Assassination commended itself to us as feasible, but after due consideration our fears persuaded us to abandon such a plan.

AN oriental chronicle I had read many years before suggested an idea and I proposed it to Lenine and Trotsky, who were enthusiastic. Strauss was in the habit of mounting a horse and leading his troops to the charge after the fashion of a French general who had made a great name for himself in the summer campaign of 1918 east of Amiens. We had hoped that his folly might prove fatal, but day after day he defied the shells and bullets of the foe, although several horses were shot under him.

I was sent as an envoy to plead with

him to abandon this method of fighting. Knowing that he was susceptible to flattery I addressed him in these terms:

"We cannot achieve the victory if you are lost to us. You have accomplished marvels, but you can do just as well if you guard your safety better. For a successful local victory you are risking the defeat of the entire army. Your men have absolute confidence in you because of your brilliant military qualities and will fight just as courageously whether you lead them in person or direct them in the usual fashion."

For a time he resisted my blandishments, but in a moment of weakness surrendered. I seized this favorable opportunity to send my decoys throughout his army whispering that their commander had been slain. In less than a day his men were in a panic. They looked into one another's eyes and saw only dismay and terror.

Word was sent to Ludendorff and he ordered an immediate offensive. Meantime Strauss, whom I had surrounded with flatterers, did not begin to understand the real situation until it was too late. Then he mounted a horse and rode from point to point, trying in this manner to counteract the effects of our machinations, but meantime his troops had begun to retreat in terrible disorder. Anyone who has seen a panic among despairing troops knows how frightfully progressive it is. By the second day our whole army was in mad retreat, committed to hopeless catastrophe.

WHEN I reported to the emperor as in an expansive, almost jolly humor. He shook me warmly by the hand and informed me that I would soon receive the Order of Merit and be raised to the nobility. What a sublime man!

Taking me familiarly by the arm he led me to one of the palace windows and described with glee how a few hundred Sparticans had been executed before his eyes that morning. He had honored them with a sermon and called down the blessing of heaven upon them.

Laughing vivaciously, he drew me back to his study and picked up a sheaf of telegrams and cablegrams. All of them were congratulations from entente rulers upon the "glorious victory of General Ludendorff."

How happy I am that I should have been the chosen instrument of Providence to restore our beloved emperor to his throne.



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